

Too Many Pumpkins

ABOUT THE STORY

Rebecca Estelle hates pumpkins. They were all she had to eat for a period of her childhood, and she has banished every thought of them from her mind. That is, until one day when a pumpkin falls out of a passing truck. Determined not to deal with it, Rebecca Estelle buries the pumpkin and swears she'll have nothing to do with it again. However, by fall there are pumpkins filling her entire front yard. Rebecca Estelle devises a plan that solves her pumpkin problem and makes her some new friends while reminding her that maybe pumpkins aren't so bad after all.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Linda White based Rebecca Estelle on her own Aunt Becky, who grew up on a farm during the Depression. She is also the author of *Cooking on a Stick: Campfire Recipes for Kids*. Ms. White lives in Colorado with her family.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Megan Lloyd has illustrated several children's books, including *A Regular Flood Mishap*, *Thanksgiving at the Tapletons'* and *The Gingerbread Man*. Ms. Lloyd lives in Pennsylvania with her husband.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the group to list foods they really dislike. What situation would make them eat the food? Explain that in this story, even though Rebecca Estelle couldn't stand the thought of ever having anything to do with pumpkins again, she finds out that even something she hates so much can turn out to have a good use.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- Why did Rebecca Estelle hate pumpkins? (all she ate for a month)
- Who lives with Rebecca Estelle? (cat Esmeralda)
- How did the pumpkin vine come to grow in her yard? (pumpkin fell off truck)
- What did she find in her front yard in the fall? (pumpkins)
- What did she decide to do with the pumpkins? (give them away – baked them into treats)
- How did she get the neighbors to come get the treats? (lit a bunch of jack-o'-lanterns)
- For Discussion: Why did she keep some pumpkin seeds?

Vocabulary

Write these words on the chalkboard and review their meanings. Then ask volunteers to use the words in sentences.

rutabagas	scarce	harvesttime	concentrated	cubbyhole
enormous	smithereens	sprouts	curious	snugly
peered	tramped	shrieked	twined	nuisance
folks	wheelbarrow	brow		

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Social Studies/Research Skills: Depression Days

Review the reason why Rebecca Estelle hated pumpkins. Have students do research to find out what people had to eat during the Depression. How was food rationed? Who got it? How did they get it? Write short reports with their findings.

Home & Career Skills: Snack Time

If possible, send a note home ahead of time and ask families to send in various types of pumpkin treats for the class to sample after reading this story. If a stove is available, divide the class into smaller groups and have each group mix up a pumpkin recipe to share with the rest of the class. Bring in toasted pumpkin seeds for the kids to sample. Compile a class cookbook of pumpkin recipes.

Language Arts: Pumpkin Acrostics

Give each child a paper with the word pumpkin written vertically. Have the kids come up with an adjective that relates to pumpkins for each letter of the word. For added fun, use orange and green markers or crayons.

Science: Sow the Seeds

Provide children with a seed and ask them what the seed needs in order for it to grow. Provide necessary materials (soil, water, cup to hold it, etc.) and have students plant their seeds. Place in a sunny spot. Add a mathematics component to this activity by having kids chart the seed's growth.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Pumpkins

Have students find out where pumpkins are grown. How big can they get? How did the tradition of carving them into jack-o'-lanterns get started?

Great Depression

Do further research on the Great Depression. Write reports or share three facts with the class.